

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

and, above all, boat races take place at every festival, or as often as the Laotians can think of an excuse to have them. There is something in it the temporary competitive and voluntary character of the effort required by gameSj as well as the chance to bet on the outcome, that such activity irresistible to the Laotians, who hate the routine drudgery of daily toil, which is inexplicably enough the Occidental ideal.

LAOTIAN ARTS

The seventeenth century was an era of peace that permitted the arts to flourish. The insouciance, which is a Laotian characteristic[^] explains the fragility of their innumerable monuments. In the South[^] Khmer influence predominates; in the North, Burmese. Under this double aegis temples, libraries, and reliquaries have been built by the Laotians without originality but always with grace and elegance. The pitiless tropical vegetation has strangled almost all of them; even the Vat Pakeo, which the French have tried to save, seems doomed to destruction. The wood sculpture is of gigantic proportions and fashioned in the expressionless attitude of the Buddhist liturgy. The painting, which consists of frescoes in the pagodas, was the work of foreign of whom the Laotians were only the pupils. It is in jewellery and the working of precious metals that the Laotians have shown their artistry. like all Far Eastern peoples they are very devoted at weaving.

THE ECONOMY OF LAOS

industry, if *it* may be called, aims only **to satisfy**
It **is** exclusively a family affair in which primitive

are crude results. Only in precious
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or earring las **Loos** aa industry that merits
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are also excellent, but **as** yet
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